

Malta & Sicily



ACTIVE
TRAVEL
for Cultural
Explorers



Islands of the Ancient Mediterranean

Sponsored By
University of Illinois Alumni Association

EXPLORERS
ALUMNI TRAVEL PROGRAM

April 24 – May 4, 2025

EXPLORERS

ALUMNI TRAVEL PROGRAM

Dear EXPLORERS and Friends,

The Mediterranean's marvelous, multifaceted character comes alive on this enriching, nine-night journey to Malta and Sicily! Shaped by a mosaic of cultures, these beautiful islands between Europe and northern Africa abound with extraordinary treasures. Stand in awe of illustrious monuments of antiquity, from Malta's prehistoric architectural wonders to Sicily's resplendent ruins that exemplify the pinnacle of the Greek and Roman civilizations. Over four nights in Sliema, Malta, and five nights in Taormina, Sicily, revel in Valletta's baroque splendor and Taormina's timeless allure, plus enjoy guided strolls through charming Mdina and Rabat, ancient Maltese towns, and lovely Ortygia, the historic heart of Syracuse, Sicily. Along the way, indulge in the Mediterranean's acclaimed cuisine and learn about enduring traditions like Sicilian pizza making and Maltese sea salt farming.

It's an exceptional experience packed with must-see attractions and enhanced with rich insights from knowledgeable local guides and lecturers. Throughout your travels, all the details are covered by a professional Travel Director, leaving you more time to savor each day's adventures and the camaraderie of your small group.

Space on this wonderful, well-rounded program will fill quickly, so reserve your place today. The historic grandeur of Malta and Sicily awaits you!

Sincerely,



David Bambrey
President

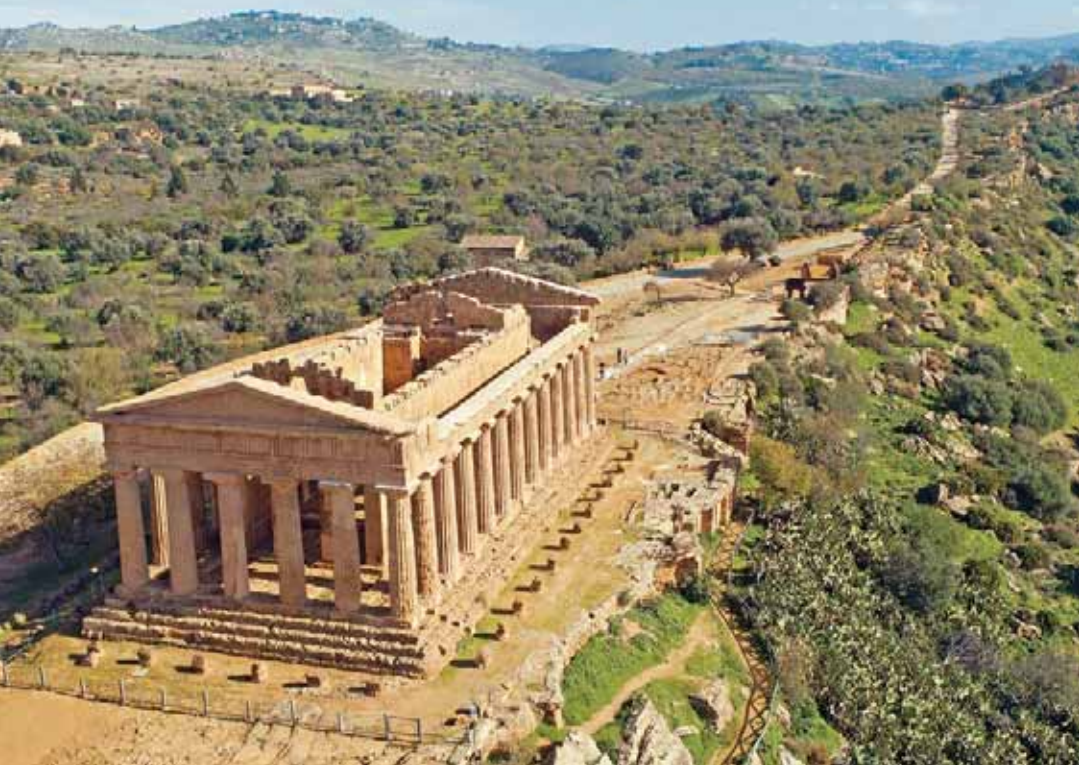
The EXPLORERS program is open to alumni of the University of Illinois, their families, and friends.

UNESCO World Heritage

1. The City of Valletta, Malta
2. Megalithic Temples of Malta
3. Late Baroque Towns of the Val di Noto, Italy
4. Villa Romana del Casale, Italy
5. Syracuse, Italy
6. Archaeological Area of Agrigento, Italy

Piazza del Duomo, Syracuse





A World of Discovery



Small in size but bursting with historic riches, the captivating islands of Malta and Sicily will reward you with unforgettable memories on this nine-night adventure! Discover the splendid cultural legacy of these sun-bleached lands at the crossroads of the Mediterranean, sought after and conquered by numerous civilizations since antiquity. It's a fascinating exploration that reveals their richly layered stories, striking natural beauty and incomparable treasures.

Top: Temple of Concordia, Agrigento

Above: Maltese fishing boats

Cover: Valletta | Mail panel: Ancient theater of Taormina with views of Mount Etna

Inspiring Moments



- Take in the stately medieval and baroque architecture along the intimate streets of **Valletta**, Malta's capital.
- Appreciate the glorious ruins of Sicily's renowned ancient cities of **Agrigento** and **Syracuse**.
- Delve into Roman aristocratic life through the spectacular, world-class **mosaics of Villa Romana del Casale**.
- Behold the intriguing Neolithic temples of **Hagar Qim** and **Ggantija**, older than the Great Pyramids and Stonehenge.
- Feel transported through time within the beautiful and colorful Maltese towns of **Mdina** and **Rabat**.
- Savor the breathtaking scenery and chic ambiance of **Taormina**, Sicily's celebrated resort town perched on a hilltop.
- Experience six **UNESCO World Heritage sites**.



Day 1 | In Transit

Depart your gateway city for Valletta, Malta. 🌐

Day 2 | Valletta, Malta | Sliema

Upon arrival, transfer 🚗 to Sliema and check in to the AX The Palace. Tonight, meet your fellow travelers at a Welcome Reception and Dinner.

Day 3 | Valletta

Enrichment: *History of Malta.*

Valletta. Over a history spanning almost 8,000 years, Malta has been ruled by the Phoenicians, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, the Order of St. John and the British, among others. In 1566, the Knights of the Order of St. John built this magnificent, fortified city between two natural harbors. On a guided walk within this UNESCO World Heritage site, admire stunning views over the Grand Harbor from the Upper Barrakka Gardens. Then, visit Valletta's crown jewel, the St. John's Co-Cathedral, featuring a dazzling interior and Caravaggio's masterpiece, "The Beheading of John the Baptist." Next, tour the elegant Casa Rocca Piccola, a 16th-century noble house. Enjoy lunch at a restaurant later.

Free Time: The rest of the day is yours to plan.

Day 4 | Mdina | Rabat | Hagar Qim

Mdina & Rabat. Largely car-free, Malta's walled ancient capital of Mdina is known as the Silent City. Pass through the regal city gate and stroll along its enchanting lanes to see handsome noble houses and St. Paul's Cathedral. On a walk in nearby Rabat, visit the Domus Romana, a museum on the site of a Roman house.

Relish lunch, then set off for the southern coast.

Hagar Qim Temples. Malta boasts some of the world's oldest free-standing stone buildings, a group of megalithic temples recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage site. Dating from 3600-3200 B.C., these astounding structures were built before the advent of metal tools and the introduction of the wheel. Marvel at the Hagar Qim temple-complex with your guide.

Free Time: Return to the hotel for leisure time.

Day 5 | Ggantija | Victoria | Xwejni Bay

Island of Gozo. Journey by ferry to this scenic island in the Maltese archipelago for a guided tour of another of Malta's megalithic gems, the Ggantija temple-complex, more than 5,500 years old and named for a fabled female giant. In Gozo's capital, Victoria, head up to the atmospheric, fortified Cittadella above the city for a guided stroll. Later, learn how a local

Cittadella, Victoria





Ortygia, Syracuse

family uses centuries-old methods to collect, dry and store sea salt from a patchwork pattern of rock-cut salt pans along the shore of Xwejni Bay. Afterward, return by ferry to Malta.

Free Time: Your evening in Sliema is at leisure.

Day 6 | Embark ferry | Pozzallo, Italy | Piazza Armerina | Taormina

Check out this morning for the ferry to Sicily. After disembarking, enjoy a panoramic drive with views of Caltagirone in the Val di Noto on your route. Stop for lunch in Piazza Armerina.

Sicily's Mosaic Masterpieces. Study some of the most superb Roman mosaics in the world at Villa Romana del Casale, a UNESCO World Heritage site. This villa from the fourth century A.D. features more than 40 impeccably crafted floors with intricate scenes of heroes, hunting, circus games, female athletes and much more. Continue to Taormina and check in to the Eurostars Monte Tauro.


Free Time: Find a nice spot for dinner in town.

Detail of mosaics, Villa Romana del Casale



Day 7 | Taormina

Taormina. Meander with your guide through this fashionable hillside resort town and see its medieval landmarks. Visit the famous Greek theater that offers stellar vistas of the Ionian Sea and majestic Mount Etna in the distance.

 **AHI Connects | Pizza Cooking Demo.** Get great tips for preparing authentic Sicilian pizza during a demonstration, then dig in for lunch!

Enrichment: Sicilian Culture & Traditions. Dine with your group tonight in Taormina.

Day 8 | Syracuse

Syracuse. Take in the Greek theater and the Roman amphitheater of this influential ancient Mediterranean city, then explore Latomia del Paradiso, a former limestone quarry, and the Ear of Dionysius, famed for its acoustics. After a stop to view Caravaggio's "The Burial of St. Lucy" at the Basilica Santa Lucia, walk along the picturesque lanes of Ortygia, Syracuse's island old town, a UNESCO World Heritage

Piazza IX Aprile, Taormina





site. Visit the baroque Cathedral of Syracuse in the Piazza del Duomo on your guided stroll.

Day 9 | Agrigento

After breakfast, depart for southwest Sicily. Agrigento's Valley of the Temples. One of the most outstanding archaeological sites in the Mediterranean, the Valley is a showcase of the world's finest and best-preserved Greek temples. Be awed by the Doric temples of Concordia, Juno, Hercules and others on a tour of this UNESCO World Heritage site.

Day 10 | Taormina

Free Time: Choose to join today's Elective Activity or craft your own agenda in Taormina.

Elective / Mount Etna. Get an up-close look at Europe's largest active volcano! Walk along the Silvestri craters and see the lava fields at this UNESCO World Heritage site. Gather for a Farewell Reception and Dinner.

Day 11 | In Transit

Transfer to the airport in Catania for the return flight to your gateway city.

Note: Itinerary may change due to local conditions.

Flights and transfers included for AHI FlexAir participants.

Elective experiences available at an additional cost.

ACTIVE TRAVEL

This Active Program is designed for people who are in good health and can comfortably participate in a demanding daily schedule of physical activities. For more details, please call or visit our website.

Excursions on this program require:

- walking on cobblestones, unpaved paths and uneven surfaces
- getting on and off motor coaches
- walking on steep inclines/declines and up and down stairs

Included Features

Accommodations (with baggage handling)

- **4 nights** in Sliema, Malta, at the first-class AX The Palace.
- **5 nights** in Taormina, Italy, at the first-class Eurostars Monte Tauro.

Transfers (with baggage handling)

- All transfers in the Land Program: ferries and deluxe motor coaches.

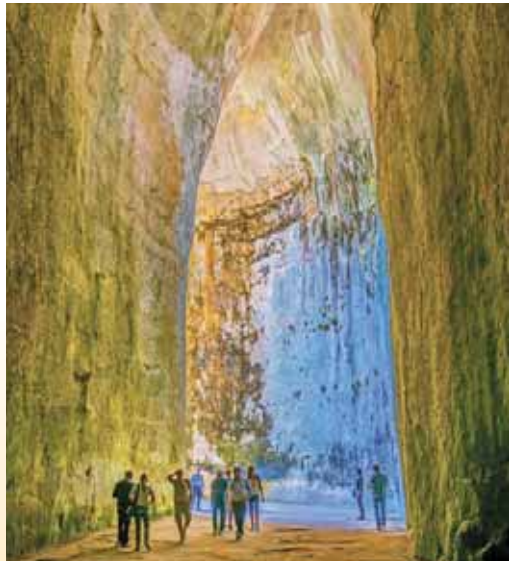
Extensive Meal Program

- 9 breakfasts, 6 lunches and 3 dinners, including Welcome and Farewell Dinners; tea or coffee with all meals, plus wine with dinner.

Your One-of-a-Kind Journey

- **Small group:** Sized just right at 28 guests.
- **Enrichment by expert speakers** enhances your insight into the region.
- **Engaging excursions** showcase the local culture, heritage and history.
- **Electives** and free time to pursue your individual interests.
- **AHI Connects | Local immersion.**
- Welcome and Farewell Receptions to mingle with fellow travelers.
- A personal VOX headset to hear your English-speaking guide clearly.
- Tipping of guides and drivers.
- Complimentary travel mementos.
- **AHI Sustainability Promise:** We strive to make a positive impact wherever we travel.

Ear of Dionysius, Neapolis Archaeological Park, Syracuse



Accommodations



AX The Palace | Sliema



Our travel experts have carefully selected these first-class hotels for their prime locations within these vibrant towns in Malta and Sicily. During your stay at each property, delight in friendly, attentive care from the professional staff. Of utmost importance is the superior quality of their services, amenities and accommodations.



Eurostars Monte Tauro | Taormina



Reserve your trip today!

To book your journey,
please call our AHI Travel Experts
at 844-414-0369 or
visit <https://uiaa.org/explorers/>.

Program Dates

Travel dates †

April 24 – May 4, 2025

† Travel dates include any overnights required for international travel. These dates may vary depending on air schedules.

Tour dates*

April 25 – May 4, 2025

* Tour dates begin on the scheduled arrival date at your destination and end on the scheduled departure date from your destination.

Land Program

Full Price	\$5,045
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Special Savings	\$750
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Early Booking Special Price*	\$4,295
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*Early Booking Special Price valid if booked by date on address panel and paid in full at booking. If you pay only your deposit by early booking date, you still save \$250 per person.

VAT is an additional \$395 per person.

All prices quoted are in USD, per person, based on double occupancy and do not include air transportation costs (unless otherwise stated).

Special offers, promotions and discounts cannot be combined.

Single accommodations are an additional \$1,495 (limited availability).

Please note: Program-specific terms and conditions are available at <https://il.ahitravel.com/destinations/1880A?schoold=69>. You can also request a copy from our travel experts.

Any payment to AHI Travel constitutes your acceptance of the terms and conditions set out therein, including but not limited to the cancellation terms.

AHI FlexAir

Let us arrange your flights

Our experts are ready to assist you in booking flights. Our personalized air program offers the following advantages:

- **price guarantee** to protect you from fuel surcharge increases after ticket purchase
- arrival and departure **transfers** on group dates
- **flexibility** to change or cancel your reservation before departure on most flights (Fees may apply.)
- **assistance** in the event of schedule changes or delays

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PARTICIPATING AIRLINES-all IATA and ARC Member Carriers

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St. Paul's Cathedral, Mdina



Ancient theater ruins, Taormina



Salt pans, Xwejni Bay



Hagar Qim temple



Sicilian pizza

AHI Travel Expertise



From your reservation to your return home, we are here to ensure you have the adventure of a lifetime.

Before you go:

Travel Consultants stand ready to answer your questions as they guide you through the reservation process.

Travel & Air Coordinators each offer their personalized assistance with flights, electives and special requests.

Travel Information provides pre-departure details and enrichment about your destination.

Once you arrive:

Your Travel Director, a seasoned, multilingual professional, manages daily logistics so you enjoy a seamless experience.

Handpicked Expert Guides offer fascinating insights and share their passion for their country with you.

Knowledgeable Lecturers deepen your appreciation for the region and its history, culture and current events.



Old town, Mdina

EXPLORERS

ALUMNI TRAVEL PROGRAM

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- Safety and security.



Please call or refer to our website for the most current program information, discounts and pricing.

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